

FY21 VOCA Request for Grant Applications - Renewal Questions and Answers – FINAL - 12.17.19

Q: Is this renewal for FY21 and FY22?

A: Yes, this renewal is for both FY21 and FY22.

Q: Under the limited English proficiency (LEP) organizational support allow for increased staffing?

A: The LEP organizational support allows for increased staffing via a consultant or a contract. The LEP organizational support does not allow for increased staffing to your VOCA funded personnel.

Q: How much funding is available for technology upgrades?

A: MOVA anticipates making approximately \$2,500,000.00 in funding available to support technology upgrades.

Q: Is an electronic accounting system an allowable request under technology upgrades?

A: Yes.

Q: If we request to purchase a client database system under technology upgrades, would the ongoing annual cost be allowable moving forward?

A: Ongoing maintenance beyond FY21 is not guaranteed.

Q: Are we able to modify our staffing structure to suite client needs as long as we do not increase our overall FTEs?

A: While you **cannot** increase personnel, we will consider a change, such as noted below, when justified by client need. If you are proposing changes to the staffing which does not impact your current scope of services and which does not increase currently approved FTEs, note the changes and the reason for this request in narrative question 3.

Q: Will the bidders' conference webinar be recorded?

A: While we aren't recording the webinar, we will be posting the PowerPoint slides to COMMBUYS (<https://www.commbuys.com/bsa/>) and our website (www.mass.gov/mova). Questions can be submitted to kristen.tavano@mass.gov up until December 13.

Q: Can we request more funding than we are currently awarded?

A: Yes, you can request more than you are currently awarded, as long as those increased costs fall under one or more of the 'allowable' organizational supports as outlined on pages 4 and 5 of the RGA:

Q: Should the technology expenses usually charged to the VOCA funding request, like IT costs and software support, now be moved to the technology upgrades funding request?

A: No. Regular ongoing operating costs (which are necessary for the program) should stay on the regular (FY21/FY22 VOCA) funding request. One-time expenses and upgrades should be on the tech funding request.

Q: When I open the VOCA PDF application, I get an error message.

A: Ensure you download the application via a browser other than Chrome, on a PC. Save the application to your desktop and open from there.

Q: In the last 12 months we have invested heavily in a database management system that is used for our VOCA clients. This has recently been paid for and installed. Could we include this expense in our tech upgrade response?

A: No. You cannot apply for costs which have already been incurred/paid out in FY20. The technology upgrades application is for costs that will be incurred/paid in FY21 only.

Q: We have received scanned copies of our letters of support. Can we submit those, or are original copies required?

A: We are not requesting letters of support under the VOCA renewal (unless you are providing services to incarcerated victims. In that case, an updated MOU is required, and a scanned copy is acceptable).

Q: Are we only able to request professional development funds for staff included in the VOCA funding request?

A: Under this RGA, funds which support annual professional development to support your victim services program (VOCA and VOCA match funded FTE, and non-VOCA funded direct service personnel) is allowable.

Q: Does the 5% increase in salary (personnel) apply to each of the staff members currently funded by VOCA or does it mean that we can only request a total of 5% for the entire personnel cost category?

A: The 5% increase in salary applies to each of the staff members currently funded by VOCA:

Q: Are we able to increase the salary and fringe benefits for one of our staff currently funded by VOCA to full year, or do we need to keep that staff member at a partial year?

A: We will not consider requests to increase staffing levels beyond the currently approved levels. Pages 4 and 5 outline the costs which are considered allowable within the renewal.

Q: Would it be allowable to request 1 additional staff person for our VOCA funded program?

A: No. Under this RGA, we will not consider requests to increase staffing levels beyond the currently approved levels. Pages 4 and 5 outline the costs which are considered allowable within the renewal.

Q: What is the VOCA bid number on COMMBUYS?

A: The VOCA bid number is BD-20-1111-1111C-1111L-45805

Q: Can there be a 5% increase in staff salary in FY21 and an additional 5% increase in FY22? Or is the increase limited to a total of 5% over the two years?

A: Under this RGA, increased compensation for staff is not to exceed 5% within the 'personnel – salary' cost category. This means you can either request a 5% increase in FY21 and that will be 'level funded' in FY22; OR you can split the 5% over the two years (but it cannot be 5% in FY21 and another increase of any amount in FY22).

Q: If we request separate funding for technology for FY21 can we add this expense into the VOCA budget for FY22?

A: Applicants should not expect ongoing funding support beyond the one-year (FY21) award. MOVA will not commit to annual maintenance costs associated with purchases made via this funding.

Q: If requesting technology funding, should that be included in the FY21 funding request as well as the technology funding request?

A: Regular ongoing operating costs (which are necessary for the program) should stay on the regular (FY21/FY22 VOCA) funding request. One-time expenses and upgrades should be on the tech funding request.

Q: Is an upgrade to our office telephone system an allowable expense under the technology upgrade funding request?

A: Requested technology upgrades should be focused on improving victim services and may be organization wide if implementation positively impacts the victim services programming. This would be an allowable cost.

Q: Is there a matching requirement for the technology grant?

A: Yes, however you may request a match waiver for the technology grant.

Q: For the FY21/FY22 funding request, can staff be added/removed so long as the personnel cost category does not increase?

A: While you **cannot** increase personnel (FTEs) beyond you currently approved levels, we will consider a change, when justified by client need. If you are proposing changes to the staffing which does not impact your current scope of services and which does not increase currently approved FTEs, note the changes and the reason for this request in narrative question 3. Please see page 4-5 of the RGA for more information on allowable costs.

Q: Is additional backup documentation required for indirect de minimus rate costs included in the expenditure report each month?

A: Backup documentation for indirect is the expenditure report itself; since the indirect request must align with the proper actual charges from the monthly expenditure report. Sub recipients are asked to have an internal policy for tracking indirect and must show this during the monitoring process.

Q: Our FY19 logic model included a higher FTE request that we were ultimately funded for. Should we use that same figure this time, or reduce it to match what we are requesting this time?

A: You are to use the FY19 logic model which was submitted during FY19 contracting and update as necessary for FY21/FY22. If you need a copy of your logic model, please contact your grants manager.

Q: Does the 5% maximum 'personnel – salary' increase apply to FY21 only, or can we ask for a 5% increase in FY21 with an additional 2-3% for cost of living increase in FY22?

A: Under this RGA, increased compensation for staff is not to exceed 5% within the 'personnel – salary' cost category. This means you can either request a 5% increase in FY21 and that will be 'level funded' in FY22; OR you can split the 5% over the two years (but it cannot be 5% in FY21 and another increase of any amount in FY22).

Q: Would TracPhones purchased for client emergency use be allowable as a Technology request? There would be no long-term service plans to maintain, and clients assume the cost after the initial pre-loaded service and minutes run out.

A: No, this cost would not be considered under the technology upgrade funding request.

Q: Are we required to send a revised logic model based on our actual FY19 award?

A: You are to use the FY19 logic model which was submitted during FY19 contracting and update as necessary for FY21/FY22. If you need a copy of your logic model, please contact your grants manager.

Q: I would like to purchase new recording equipment for the forensic interviews. Does this fall under the technology grant?

A: Regular ongoing operating costs (which are necessary for the program) should stay on the regular (FY21/FY22 VOCA) funding request. One-time expenses and upgrades should be on the tech funding request.

Q: We use our Clinical Specialist (who is a consultant to our program) to run parent workshops for domestic abuse survivors. Can we ask for renewal funds to allow for more workshops in the FY 21 and FY22 proposal?

A: You may increase the amount of workshops but may not request additional funding to do so. As this is not a cost which is explicitly stated as allowable for additional funding under the RGA, we would expect that your maximum obligation would not increase (outside of the allowable increases such as salary/fringe, professional development, indirect, LEP).

Q: I don't see on the RGA that we have to also submit original hard copies by mail. I know that the previous grant cycle we did. Is it electronic submission only this year?

A: Correct – it is electronic submission only this year.

Q: Several required documents need to be signed by an authorized signatory. Can these forms be scanned for this emailed submission?

A: Yes, you can scan the signed document.

Q: Regarding the eligibility checklist, how can we include the signatures on this form?

A: You can print out the form, complete, and then scan the completed copy back to us.

Q: Can we increase our fringe rate? Can we do that based on change in benefits?

A: Yes, an increase in necessary fringe is allowable. Adjustments should be calculated based on the annual cost, regardless of timing of increase.

Q: Does the PMT count as a data point (narrative question)?

A: Yes, the PMT data entered by a program can be used as a data point.

Q: What are you referring to when you say data points will be used to determine grant approval?

A: To clarify, in regard to evaluation criteria: The following areas will be considered when reviewing applications: Has the applicant provided a complete application, including a detailed program narrative and funding request, which

outlines VOCA allowable services? Has the applicant provided a complete and detailed response which includes: an update on the status of program objectives; information on the ongoing need for program services – including use of at least one data point – and how the program has met, and plans to keep meeting, these needs. See page 12 of the RGA for more information.

Q: Our intent to apply form was submitted late. How this will affect the review of our application?

A: The late intent to apply form will deduct a few points from your total score but will not impact the possibility of your receiving a renewal grant.

Q: What does "RGA number" refer to on the organizational questionnaire?

A: That can be found on page 2 of the RGA:

Q: We did not submit our intent to apply form on time – will it still be accepted?

A: Yes, we will accept a late intent to apply form. It will be marked as such.

Q: I would like to include an updated and signed copy of our MOU with a legal services program. Would that be ok to include in our application? If so, where should I include it? I do not see that option listed on the FY2021 submission checklist.

A: You can note in the budget narrative under ‘contracts’ that it is included with the application.

Q: Related to the allowable ‘personnel – salary’ increase: is the 5% limit cumulative over two years or is there a 5% limit each year?

A: Under this RGA, increased compensation for staff is not to exceed 5% within the ‘personnel – salary’ cost category. This means you can either request a 5% increase in FY21 and that will be ‘level funded’ in FY22; OR you can split the 5% over the two years (but it cannot be 5% in FY21 and another increase of any amount in FY22).

Q: I cannot find a link to the incarcerated victims MOU template. Is there one or do you just want us to update the MOU we have.

A: If you were funded to provide services to incarcerated victims in FY19/FY20, we are looking for you to submit your updated MOU (we don’t have a template).

Q: Should website update costs be included in the FY21 VOCA funding request or the technology upgrade funding request?

A: Regular ongoing operating costs (which are necessary for the program) should stay on the regular (FY21/FY22 VOCA) funding request. One-time expenses and upgrades should be on the tech funding request.

Q: In the PDF application, I’m not able to type our full agency name in the box. Is it ok to abbreviate Massachusetts to “MA”?

A: Yes

Q: In the PDF application, the DUNS number field seems to be formatted for a different type of number and I can’t get our number to stay in there correctly.

A: If you have already entered data into your application, you may submit a separate word document which states your DUNS number.

Q: For the technology upgrades funding request – are there any guidelines on how much an organization can apply for, or percentage of total request?

A: No. We anticipate awarding a total of \$2.5 million.

Q: Will the questions asked during the bidders’ conference webinar be included with any other questions applicants have from now until the closing date?

A: Yes, we will be including all questions (from both the webinar and otherwise received) in the final Q+A which will be posted to COMMBUYS/MOVA website on 12/17.

Q: Can we request an increase in VOCA funds to pay for professional development for the attorneys on our Reduced-Fee Legal Service?

A: VOCA renewal funds cannot be used to pay for professional development for consultants/contracts.

Q: Is our Vice President of Research Operations an appropriate person to sign the contractor authorized signatory form and the letter of intent?

A: That would be a question/determination for your agency leadership.

Q: Can you explain how to calculate the 10% de minimus?

A: A tip sheet is available on our website.

Q: For 'personnel – salary': would the 5% increase apply to both FY21 & FY22 together or would it be allowed as 5% increase relative to FY20 for FY21, and then 5% increase relative to FY21 for FY22?

A: Under this RGA, increased compensation for staff is not to exceed 5% within the '*personnel – salary*' cost category. This means you can either request a 5% increase in FY21 and that will be 'level funded' in FY22; OR you can split the 5% over the two years (but it cannot be 5% in FY21 and another increase of any amount in FY22)

Q: For 'personnel – salary': is the 5% increase to be calculated based on the original approved budget for FY20 or based on the last approved AMENDED budget that the agency submitted?

A: It should be based on your currently approved budget.

Q: Are membership subscriptions to organizations that allow for free and paid trainings for staff an allowable cost under this category? Or is the staff development and training only pertain to actual cost of an individual training.

A: This is allowable as long as the subscription is in the agency's name and not an individual's name.

Q: Can the agency request for funding to cover current expenditures on an existing database/software or does it have to be an upgrade or new software?

A: Regular ongoing operating costs (which are necessary for the program) should stay on the regular (FY21/FY22 VOCA) funding request. One-time expenses and upgrades should be on the tech funding request.

Q: Would subscriptions to a database – like LexisNexis – be an allowable expense under this category?

A: Subscriptions to a database are allowable as long as the subscription is in the agency's name and not an individual's name.

Q: It appears there is no proposed budget spreadsheet in the documents available on COMMBUYS. Is that something that does need to be included with the renewal application, or do we complete in 2020 if we are approved to renew?

A: We do ask for an updated budget with the application. On COMMBUYS, the files are called FY21 VOCA funding request (with match) and FY21 VOCA funding request (without match).

Q: If we include the cost of attending a national conference related to domestic violence/sexual assault services, under professional development, is there a limit on how much we can allot for that per person, and is there any limit on how many program staff can attend? Does it include airfare as well as hotel, meals and related costs?

A: Yes, professional development costs can include airfare/hotel/meals and incidental expenses. Any costs requested for staff should not exceed your agency's policies on travel/training/etc. Under this RGA, professional development funds can support VOCA/VOCA match FTE and non-VOCA funded direct service personnel.

Q: Can we request emergency cell phones for clients under the technology upgrades funding request?

A: No.

Q: if we are requesting extra funding (LEP, training, etc.) how should we indicate that in the application?

A: This can be indicated in your budget narrative for each cost.

Q: While we can't increase FTE's, can we add FTE's that are just for the match? If we have staff paid under a state grant doing the same work, can we add that person to the grant for a match?

A: Yes, you may propose any allowable budget category or item as match.

Q: Can we submit one technology request per organization or one per program?

A: It's one per program.

Q: Can we increase a staff position's hours in the new RGA?

A: Unfortunately, under this RGA, we will not consider requests to increase staffing levels beyond the currently approved levels (your total FTE). Pages 4 and 5 outline the costs which are considered allowable within the renewal.

Q: For technology funds, is it allowable to use those towards upgrading forensic interview equipment? Or more specifically with having a contractor fix a few wiring/server/tech issues we are having with our equipment?

A: Yes, this would be allowable.

Q: In terms of the logic model - how do you want us to reference changes made since FY19?

A: You are to use the FY19 logic model which was submitted during FY19 contracting and update as necessary for FY21/FY22. If you need a copy of your logic model, please contact your grants manager.

Q: Are we allowed to adjust the percentage of an employee's allocation to the grant as long as we do not increase our FTEs?

A: While you cannot increase personnel, we will consider a change, such as noted above, when justified by client need. If you are proposing changes to the staffing which does not impact your current scope of services and which does not increase currently approved FTEs, note the changes and the reason for this request in narrative question 3 (application).

Q: If we request professional development and LEP costs, should those additions take the place of other currently approved costs or can they be supplemental?

A: The base funding level requested should reflect your FY19/FY20 approved budget (your maximum obligation award). Then, on top of that amount, you may request additional funding in any of the allowable cost categories, as outlined on page 4-5 of the RGA (salary increases, LEP, training, indirect).

Q: Are there any special considerations in the re-application process that we should keep in mind if the VOCA program subcontracts with community partners for program delivery [rather than delivering the services directly such as is the case for ICAPP]?), a few additional questions have come to mind that are a bit more specific.

A: We will be happy to respond to your specific questions, there is nothing general we have at this time.

Q: Our project's services are performed by subcontracted community partners. When submitting our application: should we ask the community partners to send their respective victim confidentiality policies to be submitted for the application?

A: Please have the community partner submit their respective confidentiality policies. It is also expected that EOHHS has reviewed these policies.

Q: Our project's services are performed by subcontracted community partners. When submitting our application: should we submit agency organizational charts for all service delivery partners?

A: Yes. Please also submit your org chart and indicate where the VOCA funded project falls.

Q: The PDF application requests the SAM registration number – should we enter our CAGE Code?

A: Yes.

Q: Are we able to move funds from one category to another as long as the overall funding request amount remains level and we don't add any new staff?

A: Yes, this would be allowable. Applicants are expected to request funding levels which reflect their FY19/FY20 approved budget, outside of any allowable organizational supports requested (salary increases, professional development, LEP, etc.)

Q: The budget template doesn't seem to have a "VOCA Match" column. I tried to add one but the spreadsheet is protected.

A: There are two budget templates available – one with match and one without match.

Q: If a program did not have professional development funding in its FY19/FY20 grant, is it able to ask for professional development funding in its FY21/FY22 application?

A: Yes, you may request professional development funding in the FY21/FY22 application even if you did not have this in your FY19/FY20 budget.

Q: Is the purchase of laptops (2) for \$1,000 to be listed under 'section E: equipment' in the VOCA funding request or to be requested separately under the technology funding request?

A: Regular ongoing operating costs (which are necessary for the program) should stay on the regular (FY21/FY22 VOCA) funding request. One-time expenses and upgrades should be on the tech funding request.

Q: Regarding the "Total Program Funding" section in the application: should the VOCA funds reflect our current FY20 VOCA amount, the new VOCA FY21 requested amount, or both VOCA FY21 + FY22 Renewal amounts?

A: The "Total Program Funding" section should reflect an annual amount. You can use FY20 amounts.

Q: Is the maximum 5% increase for salary in regard to the entire 'personnel – salary' cost category, or for each staff person on the budget?

A: The maximum 5% increase for salary is for each staff person on the budget.

Q: If we have multiple VOCA funded programs, do we need to submit the organizational questionnaire multiple times, or just once?

A: No, you only have to submit the organizational questionnaire once.

Q: On the funding request forms that I downloaded, there was a summary tab for the two fiscal years total, but not one for each of the years separately. In this webinar you stated that there is a summary tab for each of the two fiscal years. Is there an error on spreadsheet I downloaded?

A: Thank you for catching this. It has been corrected and reposted to COMMBUYS and our website as of December 4.

Q: Would a website revamp be considered a technology expense?

A: This would be considered as part of a tech upgrade application.

Q: What is the word count for the narrative sections of the renewal and tech applications?

A: Unfortunately, we do not have the word counts.

Q: Should the letter of intent be submitted to COMMBUYS?

A: No. Follow the instructions on the bottom of the intent to apply form.

Q: How recent do you want data points to be, for backing up continuing program need?

A: Data points should be from the past 2 – 3 years.

Q: Is the 5% cap on increases to salary, fringe, indirect for each year, or for the two years combined? For example, if we propose a 3% increase for FY21 and another 3% increase for FY22, would that exceed the limit?

A: Under this RGA, increased compensation for staff is not to exceed 5% within the '*personnel – salary*' cost category. This means you can either request a 5% increase in FY21 and that will be 'level funded' in FY22; OR you can split the 5% over the two years (but it cannot be 5% in FY21 and another increase of any amount in FY22). An additional

increase in necessary fringe and related indirect chargeback is allowable. Adjustments should be calculated based on the annual cost, regardless of timing of increase.

Q: Can you clarify Section II of the application - VOCA Program Staffing:

A: When entering data, the number of full-time employees (FTEs) will auto-calculate; When entering direct service hours, enter the number of hours – ex: two advocates working 40 hours each on the VOCA funding request would be entered as 80 direct service hours; When entering the number of volunteers, enter the number of staff, not number of volunteer hours.

Q: Regarding the technology funding request: if we want to do an upgrade of our phone system, the total project will likely be more than \$5,000, but no individual item will be more than \$5,000 (phones, lines, new switch, etc.). Would that require the additional documentation?

A: If the total contract is over \$5,000, you must submit additional documentation in the form of a vendor quote, etc.

Q: Can we apply for technology upgrade funding in FY21 even if we did not in FY19?

A: Technology upgrade funding is a separate funding request from the original FY19 application and from the current renewal.

Q: Does 5% increase for salaries include fringe - or is that compiled separately?

A: Please see pg. 4 of the RGA: Increased compensation not to exceed 5% within the 'personnel – salary' cost category. An additional increase in necessary fringe and related indirect chargeback is allowable. Adjustments should be calculated based on the annual cost, regardless of timing of increase.

Q: If we have asked for minimal tech assistance already, can we ask for a large increase, or do we have to request the same amount?

A: You may request costs which are outlined as allowable in the RGA: We anticipate awarding \$2.5 million across all applicants via the technology grant.

Q: We have two different programs, should we submit one set of documents such as the contractor authorized signatory form, etc. or a set of signed documents for both program applications? If one set is preferred how would you like it packaged?

A: Please review the information beginning on page 8 of the RGA and the submission checklist. Both outline the document submission requirements for applicants with one/multiple programs.

Q: Should the monthly cell phone contracts be listed on the technology funding request or is the technology funding request only for purchasing the physical cell phone?

A: Regular ongoing operating costs (which are necessary for the program) should stay on the regular (FY21/FY22 VOCA) funding request. One-time expenses and upgrades should be on the tech funding request.

Q: If we are contributing match on the VOCA funding request form, would we also need to contribute match on the technology request form?

A: No, you could request a partial match waiver.

Q: Are we just copying our FY19 logic model to the FY21 form?

A: You are to use the FY19 logic model which was submitted during FY19 contracting, and update as necessary for FY21/FY22. If you need a copy of your logic model, please contact your grants manager.

Q: Can you be specific about what you mean by "use the FY19 logic model"? Are we meant to report on the activities, outputs, and outcomes we listed in our FY19 models? Or we are meant to create new inputs, outputs, and outcomes?

A: You are to use the FY19 logic model which was submitted during FY19 contracting, and update as necessary for FY21/FY22. If you need a copy of your logic model, please contact your grants manager.

Q: If salary for a staff member who works on the VOCA funded program not in current budget, can it be used as a match source?

A: Programs may propose any allowable budget category or item as match.

Q: Is the expectation that agencies build their FY21 & FY22 budgets as level funded compared to FY19 & FY20, aside from the personnel costs increases?

A: Yes. Applicants are expected to request funding levels which reflect their FY19/FY20 approved budget, outside of any allowable organizational supports requested (salary increases, professional development, LEP, etc.)

Q: Can we request emergency cell phones for clients under the technology grant?

A: No.

Q: If we are requesting extra funding (LEP, training, etc.) how should we indicate that in the application?

A: This can be indicated in your budget narrative for each cost.

Q: Can we ask for technology fund in our VOCA program requests as well as in our technology upgrade request?

A: Yes. Regular ongoing operating costs (which are necessary for the program) should stay on the regular (FY21/FY22 VOCA) funding request. One-time expenses and upgrades should be on the tech funding request.

Q: Are costs to lease equipment allowable under the technology grant?

A: Leasing equipment is allowable per the VOCA Policies and Procedures. However, tech upgrade funding is only for 12 months, so these funds should not be committed to open-ended leases.

Q: Would the technology grant fund a year's worth of cell phone fees?

A: Regular ongoing operating costs (which are necessary for the program) should stay on the regular (FY21/FY22 VOCA) funding request. One-time expenses and upgrades should be on the tech funding request.

Q: Would the technology grant fund commercial printer/scanner/fax? Are they eligible for purchase or lease?

A: Yes. Technology funding is for FY21 only.

Q: Is the SAM registration number on the application intended to be our CAGE code? If so, the field appears to only accept numeric values.

A: Yes, it is. This correction was made, and the application was reposted on December 9. If you have already entered data into your application, you may submit a separate word document which states your SAM registration/CAGE code.

Q: For technology upgrades, can it be organization wide (which will also benefit VOCA funded staff) similar to how professional development costs are handled? Or should it be pro-rated for VOCA funded staff only?

A: Requested technology upgrades should be focused on improving victim services and may be organization wide if implementation positively impacts the victim services programming.

Q: If we use the special technology funds to upgrade our system, and there are some continuing support costs, can we use our regular VOCA funds for annual costs up to the extent of our current tech support costs?

A: Applicants should not expect ongoing funding support beyond the one-year (FY21) award. MOVA will not commit to annual maintenance costs associated with purchases made via this funding.

Q: If we are currently funded program, we cannot ask for more staffing?

A: Correct. We will not approve an increase in staffing.

Q: During the webinar, will you answer questions "live" or wait until the written responses are available on December 17th?

A: We answered as many questions live as possible and are now responding directly to attendees and will post a complete list by 12/17.

Q: To open and use the budget spreadsheets in my system, I needed to save it as an .xlsm document instead of a .xls document. Is that alteration permitted? Can we submit it as an .xlsm document?

A: Yes, that is acceptable.

Q: Our rent is increasing – can we request additional funding to cover this increase?

A: Yes, you may increase the office rent. However, as this is not a cost which is explicitly stated as allowable for additional funding under the RGA, we would expect that your maximum obligation would not increase (outside of the allowable increases such as salary/fringe, LEP, indirect, professional development costs).

Q: In FY19/FY20 VOCA funded a part time employee as a mental health coordinator. This staff person has retired, and I do not need that position anymore because another staff person now performs this role. Is it allowable to remove this position for FY21/FY22?

A: We expect that currently approved staffing levels are maintained. However, while you **cannot** increase personnel, we will consider a change, when justified by client need. If you are proposing changes to the staffing which does not impact your current scope of services and which does not increase or decrease currently approved FTEs, note the changes and the reason for this request in narrative question 3.

Q: Can we request rent for FY21 and FY22 if we do not have it in our currently approved FY19/FY20 budget?

A: Yes, you may request office rent. However, as this is not a cost which is explicitly stated as allowable for additional funding under the RGA, we would expect that your maximum obligation would not increase (outside of the allowable increases such as salary/fringe, LEP, indirect, professional development costs).

Q: May we request to increase our consultant's rate to the allowable maximum of \$81.25/hour?

A: You may request to increase the consultant's rate. However, as this is not a cost which is explicitly stated as allowable for additional funding under the RGA, we would expect that your maximum obligation would not increase (outside of the allowable increases such as salary/fringe, LEP, indirect, professional development costs).

Q: If we have multiple job descriptions and staff resumes, can we send them in one scan, or do they have to be sent as individual documents?

A: You may send one scan of all of the job descriptions and one scan of all staff resumes.

Q: Can we distribute funds differently between positions within the staffing line item if we don't add FTEs? In other words, can we shift funds from one position to another if the total FTEs funded under the model remain the same?

A: While you **cannot** increase personnel, we will consider a change, when justified by client need. If you are proposing changes to the staffing which does not impact your current scope of services and which does not increase currently approved FTEs, note the changes and the reason for this request in narrative question 3.

Q: Can we change positions under a service model, such as replacing one type of VOCA-funded staff member with another, if the total FTEs funded under the model remain the same and the services provided (i.e. logic model) do not change?

A: While you **cannot** increase personnel, we will consider a change, when justified by client need. If you are proposing changes to the staffing which does not impact your current scope of services and which does not increase currently approved FTEs, note the changes and the reason for this request in narrative question 3.

Q: We understand that staffing costs can increase by a maximum of 5% per staff member; are associated fringe costs capped at 5% of previously applied-for fringe, or are they able to increase proportionally to the staff salary increased AND possible changes in the actual fringe (e.g. increasing insurance costs)?

A: Under this RGA, increased compensation for staff is not to exceed 5% within the 'personnel – salary' cost category. This means you can either request a 5% increase in FY21 and that will be 'level funded' in FY22; OR you can split the 5% over the two years (but it cannot be 5% in FY21 and another increase of any amount in FY22). An additional increase in necessary fringe and related indirect chargeback is allowable. Adjustments should be calculated based on the annual cost, regardless of timing of increase.

Q: Is the technology application once per agency, or once per program? Intent to apply form confuses this for agencies that have multiple contracts/programs.

A: You may request technology upgrade funding once per program.

Q: Can we apply for increased funding for increased rent costs, if those rent costs were funded previously and the overall amount of funding under the contract (excluding allowable staff salary increases) remains the same?

A: Yes, you may request an increase in office rent. However, as this is not a cost which is explicitly stated as allowable for additional funding under the RGA, we would expect that your maximum obligation would not increase (outside of the allowable increases such as salary/fringe, LEP, indirect, professional development costs).

Q: Can we move allowable items between cost categories, add, and delete individual allowable costs as long as no new FTEs are added?

A: Yes. See above responses regarding proposed staffing changes.

Q: Is the 5% salary increase limit based on the total salary line item for FY19 & FY20 or can the salary line item in both FY21 & FY22 be no more than 5% above of the salary line item in FY 20?

A: The maximum 5% should be calculated against each VOCA funded staff person's annual salary.

Q: Is the technology upgrade restricted to technology to be used by VOCA funded staff only, or can we request technology for the agency as a whole?

A: Requested technology upgrades should be focused on improving victim services and may be organization wide if implementation positively impacts the victim services programming.

Q: On the VOCA application, it asks for the SAM registration number. This is new. What is the SAM registration number?

A: We have always required that agencies have a SAM registration, but have never asked for the number before. You should be able to obtain your agency's by visiting <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/pages/public/samStatusTracker.jsf>. We're looking for you to enter the CAGE Code.

Q: During FY20, we amended our list of VOCA funded positions and specific staff members due to staff turnover. In our FY21 application, would it be required that we apply for only those positions that were most recently funded, or could we return to our original request, now that we are fully staffed.

A: Under this RGA, we will not consider requests to increase staffing levels beyond the currently approved levels. Pages 4 and 5 outline the costs which are considered allowable within the renewal. While you **cannot** increase personnel, we will consider a change, when justified by client need. If you are proposing changes to the staffing which does not impact your current scope of services and which does not increase currently approved FTEs, note the changes and the reason for this request in narrative question 3.

Q: We may only request professional development funds for staff included in our funding request, is this correct?

A: Under this RGA, funds which support annual professional development to support your victim services program (VOCA and VOCA match funded FTE, and non-VOCA funded direct service personnel) is allowable.

Q: May we request funding for new consultants under this grant, or only continuation funding for currently funded consultants? What would the consultants be providing?

A: We would consider funding a new consultant to provide professional development training, as this is an outlined organizational support in the RGA: We would not consider funding a new consultant to provide program evaluation/technical assistance. While this is an allowable cost, it is not allowable under the organizational supports outlined in the RGA: Please see pages 4 and 5 for more information for allowable increases/organizational supports.

Q: Can we include any request for technology expenses in the funding request from under section D.? Or do all of the technology-related costs fall under the separate technology funding request form?

A: Regular ongoing operating costs (which are necessary for the program) should stay on the regular (FY21/FY22 VOCA) funding request. One-time expenses and upgrades should be on the tech funding request.

Q: If all of the technology related costs are to be included in the separate technology funding request form, does this mean that VOCA will no longer be supporting these costs at all for FY22 and beyond since the RGA states that this is only for FY21?

A: Applicants should not expect ongoing funding support beyond the one-year (FY21) award. MOVA will not commit to annual maintenance costs associated with purchases made via this funding.

Q: We were awarded money for transitional housing costs in our last award and we completed a separate set of questions related to that request in the last procurement. Is that money still an allowable expense and if so, do we need to describe the request anywhere besides the budget narrative?

A: Yes, transitional housing is still allowable under the VOCA renewal. We are not requesting a separate narrative.

Q: By upgrading hardware and software (with the technology grant), our monthly costs may go up under our VOCA funding request. Can we request an increase to monthly costs in our VOCA funding request?

A: The base funding level requested should reflect your FY19/FY20 approved budget (your maximum obligation award). Then, on top of that amount, you may request additional funding in any of the allowable cost categories, as outlined on page 4-5 of the RGA (salary increases, LEP, training, indirect). You may increase the tech costs (or other costs). However, as this is not a cost which is explicitly stated as allowable for additional funding under the RGA (outside of the separate tech grant), we would expect that your maximum obligation would not increase (outside of the allowable increases such as salary/fringe, LEP, indirect, professional development costs). Applicants should not expect ongoing funding support for technology beyond the one-year (FY21) award. MOVA will not commit to annual maintenance costs associated with purchases made via this funding.

Q: Can training funds be used for travel expenses to attend a conference out of state?

A: Yes, they can. More details are available in the VOCA Policies and Procedures.

Q: Under Renewal Proposals, pages 4-5 of the FY2021 RGA, it states that “applicants are expected to request funding levels which reflect their FY19/FY20 approved budget”. Staffing levels remain the same. It then encourages applicants to consider seeking funding for increased compensation not to exceed 5%, fringe, indirect cost rates, professional development and LEP supports. I don’t understand what it means to “reflect”. Does this mean that we can only apply up to the level of our FY20 award except for those particular cost categories specified above? For example, if our cost for rent or contracted services increases (for the same space, or the same service), do we have to cut some other cost or absorb the loss? Or does it mean that we use the cost categories that are in place for FY19/FY20, we do not add new ones but within those categories, we can add in the additional expense for things like the annual rent increases in our lease?

A: The base funding level requested should reflect your FY19/FY20 approved budget (your maximum obligation award). Then, on top of that amount, you may request additional funding in any of the allowable cost categories, as outlined on page 4-5 of the RGA (salary increases, LEP, training, indirect). You may increase the office rent (or other costs). However, as this is not a cost which is explicitly stated as allowable for additional funding under the RGA, we would expect that your maximum obligation would not increase (outside of the allowable increases such as salary/fringe, LEP, indirect, professional development costs).

Q: Can we increase a staff salary by more than 5% agency internally, as long as we keep the portion of their salary funded by VOCA to a 5% increase or less? In other words, can the agency make up the difference in a salary increase of over 5%?

A: Yes.

Q: We are interested in completing the technology upgrade request and am confused as to which funding request form to use. There is a technology funding request form with match and one without match in COMMBUYS. Is match required for this application budget request? Is a match waiver form required if not using budget request with match for this technology update?

A: Yes, match is required on the technology funding request. However, you may request a match waiver (full or partial). There is a section in the application where you can detail a match waiver request. If awarded tech funding, more information will be requested during contracting. Based on your ask, you then should use the tech funding

request form with match (for no or partial match waiver request), or the funding request form without match (for a full waiver request).

Q: Are we supposed to update the logic model to the actual figures for FY21, or keep it at what was projected when previously submitted for FY19?

A: You are to use the FY19 logic model which was submitted during FY19 contracting and update as necessary for FY21/FY22. If you need a copy of your logic model, please contact your grants manager.

Q: The technology grant narrative is on a word document, which doesn't limit narrative box spaces. What is the page limit or word limit per box?

A: We did not set a limit, but please keep your content to approximately the box space provided.

Q: The match requirement is at least 25%, is there a maximum level? Can we do 50 or 75%?

A: We only require a 25% match (unless you are requesting a waiver, in which case it could be less or zero). We do not need to see more than 25% on the budget, as we will not ask that match be reported beyond the 25% in a fiscal year. If we see a high match, we will ask you to reduce it during contracting.

Q: Can we reduce our VOCA funded FTEs and increase our VOCA match FTEs so that the total program FTEs remain the same?

A: We do want to ensure that VOCA funded FTEs reflect currently approved levels in the renewal. You could add or remove match FTEs, but we do expect that the VOCA funded staff remain the same (approximately)

Q: Is there is a cost to access the SAM registration/CAGE code (such as a \$600 fee)?

A: There should be no cost for any of the registration.

Q: If we are unable to access the SAM registration/CAGE code in time, is it ok to put "pending" on the grant application?

A: Yes, it's fine to put pending on the application. If you have a screen shot of your active SAM registration, you can submit that to us as well (that will be enough).

Q: If we request a 5% increase to staff salaries in FY21, does that mean we will only be able to ask for level funding in FY22?

A: Yes.

Q: We have two VOCA programs. A number of the tech requests we are considering will benefit both of them. How should we split those requests? It says in the RGA that we should ask for the full amount for projects, so does that mean we should ask for the whole amount for one project in one program's proposal and the whole amount for another project in the second program's proposal? Or should we pro-rate the full amount in separate requests across both programs?

A: If you wanted to put all of the costs fully under one program's technology funding request and use it to support the others, that would be acceptable.

Q: On the application form under the "VOCA Program Staffing" section, how does one show subrecipient staffing? For example, our agency does not have any personnel being funded by this grant, however, we do have a subrecipient that has staff being funded by this grant. Should we enter 0, as the staffing is through the subrecipient and staff funds are not used by us directly?

A: If you have an approved subcontract, you should report you subrecipient staffing in those fields.

Q: Following the recent discussion with MOVA, we understood that we would be able to apply for additional funding for next year to support our language and cultural capacity building partnership services with area shelters. However, the RGA guidelines seem to limit staffing to current levels, with the only allowable increases listed for raises, staff development, some costs of making programs more accessible for linguistic minority populations, and technology. Is there any way to request funds to maintain current staffing?

A: The base funding level requested should reflect your FY19/FY20 approved budget (your maximum obligation award). Then, on top of that amount, you may request additional funding in any of the allowable cost categories, as outlined on page 4-5 of the RGA (salary increases, LEP, training, indirect). While you cannot increase personnel (FTEs) under this RGA, we would consider a new consultant/contract for LEP services. The LEP organizational support allows for increased staffing via a consultant or a contract. The LEP organizational support does not allow for increased staffing to your VOCA funded personnel.

Q: Is there any additional funding for this current fiscal year? Our program is experiencing a shortfall.

A: Please see pages 4-5 of the RGA for more information on the allowable organizational support increases

Q: May we submit via USB stick?

A: Yes.

Q: Can you clarify what you are looking for with electronic signatures?

A: If you are unable to provide an electronic signature, you may print out the completed form, have the authorized signatory sign it, and then scan and submit to us.

Q: What a SAM Registration Number/CAGE code is and where I could locate it?

A: We have always required that agencies have a SAM registration, but have never asked for the number before. You should be able to obtain your agency's by visiting <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/pages/public/samStatusTracker.jsf>. We're looking for you to enter the CAGE Code.

Q: I have been paying our clinical supervisor consultant the max allowable hourly rate of \$56.25. I know the max allowable now is \$81.25. Are we allowed to increase the hourly rate we are paying our consultant during this round of funding within the allowable amount?

A: You may request to increase the consultant's rate. However, as this is not a cost which is explicitly stated as allowable for additional funding under the RGA, we would expect that your maximum obligation would not increase (outside of the allowable increases such as salary/fringe, LEP, indirect, professional development costs).

Q: If we request an amount that is higher than allowable (for a consultant), will we be jeopardizing our application, or will we just need to revise based on the amount we are awarded?

A: If you request an amount which is higher than allowable, during contracting, you will need to revise based on the amount which is awarded.

Q: I was notified by COMMBUYS that a revised application pdf was available. Is there an expectation that we use that one?

A: No, if you already entered data into the first version, please use that one. The SAM registration number field wasn't working properly – that is the only change which was made.

Q: Can I call you to ask a question?

A: No. In order to abide by the Commonwealth's Procurement Terms and Conditions, all questions related to the procurement must be submitted in writing by the December 13th deadline.

Q: Does the contractor authorized signatory form need to be updated if none of the parties have changed? What if one of the original notaries' certification has expired (but was valid at the time they notarized the document)?

A: Please submit an updated authorized signatory form.

Q: Our reading of the RGA suggests that the budget submitted cannot exceed the funding request of the original application except that the amount may increase due to: increased salary payment (up to 5% of the original application), increased fringe costs, professional development costs, LEP costs, and tech upgrades. Is this accurate? As an example, one of our subcontractors has found that they required increased travel/transportation funding to support the program. Can the request for funding include a higher travel cost line item?

A: A passthrough agency may allow their subcontractors to request any of the allowable costs as outlined in the RGA: If adjustments are necessary to cost categories not identified in the RGA, the passthrough may allow the subcontractor to amend their budget however, the maximum obligation is to remain unchanged.

Q: Regarding personnel allocations, our subcontractors have each assigned a program director to provide supervision for the program. One of our subcontractors finds that their director needs more time allocated to handle the administrative work and supervision. Will increasing the allocation for that employee be permissible? Or would the subcontract need to make a concomitant decrease in other staffing areas so that the salary request remains even (other than a potential 5% increase in salary)?

A: A passthrough agency may allow their subcontractors to request any of the allowable costs as outlined in the RGA: If adjustments are necessary to cost categories not identified in the RGA, the passthrough may allow the subcontractor to amend their budget however, the maximum obligation is to remain unchanged, and the number of FTEs should not decrease.

Q: The award for ICAPP is subcontracted to two community providers who deliver the services. One of the two contractors is interested in applying for funding under the separate technology funding request. Is it permissible to apply for the technology funding and pass that amount on to the subcontractor?

A: Yes.

Q: There will be no rollover from FY20 to FY21 permitted, is that correct?

A: Yes. There will be no rollover from FY20 to FY21.

Q: One of our subcontractors has a federally approved indirect rate, but should their rate be calculated using our federally approved rate?

A: It is up to the passthrough agency to allow their subcontractors to receive their necessary indirect. The subcontractor may receive 10% de minimus or their federally approved rate.

Q: When completing the funding request form, the vast majority of the request will fall under contracts. All costs associated with the delivery of the program will be aggregated and recorded under section G - contracts as in the original application. Is that correct?

A: Correct, however, the passthrough agency should be able to support the costs requested by the subcontractors (under section G) with detailed sub budgets which resemble MOVA's.

Q: Should we plan to submit job descriptions and resumes (paid and volunteer) for the facilitator positions housed at each of the subcontracted sites?

A: This is correct.

Q: Are we required to submit copies of the current contracts with our subcontractors as part of the application?

A: Please submit, even if draft form. An executed document will be required during contracting.

*Answers are provided to assist applicants in crafting a proposal.
MOVA reserves the opportunity to revisit or clarify any answer provided.*